

REMARKS

Claims 4-9, 24-26, 34 and 35 are pending and have been amended. Claims 1-3, 10-23, 27-33, 36 and 37 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 38-42 have been added to provide Applicant with a more complete scope of protection. Claims 4-9 are the only independent claims.

Claims 5-9 were objected to due to certain informalities. With regard to claims 5-9, those claims have been amended to remove the redundant recitation that the scope portion includes the insertion portion. Claims 5-9 were indicated as allowable and have now been rewritten in independent form. In view of the amendment to those claims, they are now believed in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-3, 10-15, 18, 19, 22-29, 32, 33, 36 and 37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent 4,539,586 (Danna et al.). Claims 1-4, 10, 12-15, 18, 19, 24, 26-29, 32 and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent Published Application US 2004/0133075 (Motoki et al.). Claims 16, 17, 30 and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Danna et al. Claims 20, 21, 34, 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Danna et al. in view of U.S. Patent 6,295,082 (Dowdy et al.). Cancellation of claims 1-3, 10-23, 27-33, 36 and 37 renders their rejections moot.

Claim 4 was not rejected over Danna et al. That claim has been rewritten in independent form. The reference that was applied against claim 4, Motoki et al., has a U.S. filing date of August 5, 2003. However, the present application claims benefit under Section 119 of Japanese application 2002-265724, filed on September 11, 2002.

Submitted herewith is a verified translation of the Japanese priority application. With the filing of this translation, Motoki et al. is no longer prior art,

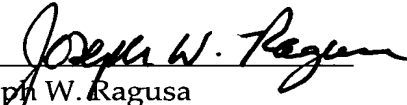
obviating the rejections of the claims based on that reference. In view of the above, all of the independent claims are believed clearly patentable over the prior art.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration, or reconsideration, as the case may be, of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

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Respectfully submitted,

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